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GLIMPSES OF..

AUSTRALIAN
BIRD LIFE...



MELBOURNE

T. C. LOTHIAN, 49 ELIZABETH STREET



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MAY 7 1906

GLIMPSES OF AUSTRALIAN BIRD LIFE



THIRTY-ONE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

DIRECT FROM NATURE

WITH NOTES BY

ROBERT HALL, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S.

Author of "The Useful Birds of Southern Australia "

"A Key to the Birds of Australia "

Joint Author of "Nature Studies in Australia "

Melbourne :

T. C. LOTHIAN, 49 ELIZABETH STREET.

1906



TO

US FOUR.



FOREWORD.



*T*HERE are few simple aids to the study of our native birds. "With Nature and the Camera" has not had the indulgence it should have had given to it. Too few of us see the animals of our country as they really are, and, may be, this booklet will help to focus our eyes, in a general way, on the wild birds of our land. Certainly it simply opens the wide field before us, but it is a beginning. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

My fellow-naturalist, Mr. A. H. Mattingley, has very generously placed at my disposal the use of most of the subjects. My thanks and a general appreciation will be the reward of many hours' labour in the obtaining of each picture. Birds are suspicious of strangers—which means the photographer must wait hours, or days, before he can, as a rule, have any marked success with them and his camera. This pleasant burden Mr. Mattingley has had to carry with a large number of his subjects. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

The Albatross pictures were taken by the late Mr. H. P. C. Ashworth; the first of which, the frontispiece, cost no less a time than twenty days in the obtaining of it. Twenty hours were spent in securing each of many of the other plates. ○ ○ ○ ○

The remaining pictures are by my own camera, in conjunction with Mr. Arthur B. Lord, a third lover of nature. They are unique and mostly rare subjects. The birds are all Australian; ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE.



THIS is the largest of our land birds of prey, and one well distributed throughout Australia. It is a daring bird. The nest is a huge mass of sticks, well arranged, and placed in a large tree by preference. The illustration shows a photograph taken of a nest situated over a dangerous gorge. ◦ ◦ ◦



NEST OF WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE.

MALLEE FOWL.



A WAY in the driest part of southern Australia, where there is any timber, a brown bird about the size of a domestic hen can be seen. It makes a nest of leaves and sand, 16 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height. In it the eggs are placed, and the decomposing leaves make the heat to hatch out the large brown eggs. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NESTING MOUND OF MALLEE FOWL.

WHIP-BIRD.



I N the silent forests of Eastern and Western Australia, and in the densest parts of them, one may hear the sharp crack of what sounds like a great whip in use. It is the Coachwhip-bird calling to his mate. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



WHIP-BIRD AND YOUNG.

REED-WARBLER.



THE little brown bird that sings in the
“noon of night” about the water’s
edge is a lover of the reeds. It is one of the
few birds which sing during the night when
watching its mate sitting upon the nest
attached to three or four reed stems. o o o



REED-WARBLER ON ITS NEST.

BLUE WREN.



THIS bonnie bird, dressed in turquoise blue and black, is the Superb Warbler of the scrub. It has a marvellous reputation as a friend of the tiller of the soil. Eighty noxious grubs in a day, and "ready for more," is its diet, much to the advantage of fruit-growers. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



BLUE WREN OR SUPEBB WARBLER.

BLACK AND WHITE FANTAIL.



THE "Shepherd's Companion" is ever
with him in the back blocks as well as
with us in the outer suburbs. It rests upon its
nest, beautifully made of grasses and spiders'
webs, and within twelve days hatches out
some of the most useful birds yet known. o o



SHEPHERD'S COMPANION (BLACK AND WHITE FANTAIL) ON NEST.

RUFIOUS-FRONTED FANTAIL.



FANTAILS are to be found in all kinds of country. The Rufous-fronted species inhabits the mountain areas, and there builds a cup-shaped nest, most beautifully made of fibres and spiders' webs. The accompanying photograph was made by Mr. Mattingley in a fern glen. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND EGGS OF RUFOUS-FRONTED FANTAIL.

THICKHEAD.

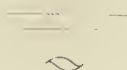


THE yellow and black birds of southern forests are mostly Thickheads, because of the breadth of the cranium. Some species are rufous. The illustration shows the nest and eggs of one of the latter in the thinly-timbered scrub. The family is quite an Australian one. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND EGGS OF RUFOUS-BREADED THICKHEAD.

ROBINS.



ALL Robins are not red-breasted. Some are
 jonquil-yellow, others pink, and rose,
 and scarlet. Some are black and white. The
 illustration shows the Hooded Robin, the
 nymph of the woods, feeding its unfledged
 young. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND YOUNG OF HOODED ROBIN.

PIPIT.



THE Ground-Lark is well distributed over
 the Commonwealth. It lives and nests
 upon the ground, and eats the ground-loving
 insects, and seeds that are not wanted for
 next year. o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o



YOUNG OF PIPIT (GROUND-LARK) IN NEST.

FROGMOUTH.



THIS is the Morepork, but not the bird
 that calls "More pork." The little
 brown Owl does that. It has a flimsy
 structure of twigs to serve as a nest, but
 rears two very beautiful grey nestlings that
 soon learn to catch insects in the twilight.
 It is a nocturnal bird. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



THE NESTLING AND EGG OF TAWNY FROGMOUTH.

FROGMOUTH.



THE Tawny-shouldered Frogmouth is a mimic of its surroundings, not only in colour, but in form. If grey, it keeps to grey timber; if brown, to brown timber. Instead of having the graceful outline of most birds, it is angular when resting, in order to appear as a broken limb on the tree. Then it is perfectly quiet. The photograph is a fine one, showing such a bird in a protective attitude.



TAWNY FROGMOUTH MIMICKING BROKEN LIMB.
(ARROW INDICATES POSITION OF BIRD.)

WOOD-SWALLOW.



THE bird the boys know as the Summer-bird is a very useful one. In spring it hatches out three little ones, and they, in turn, become insectivorous, and well respected by all the wisest of fruit-growers and their sons. It is well distributed over Australia. ° °



YOUNG OF SORDID WOOD-SWALLOW.

QUAIL.



GROUND-LOVING birds are mostly sportsmen's birds. Many Quail, useful though they are, come to this end. The Painted Quail lies quietly in its nest upon the ground and at once is photographed. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



PAINTED QUAIL ON NEST.

PARROT.



THE Rosella, numerically, is a strong species,
found broadly distributed and in large
numbers. It nests each spring, and places
its white eggs in the hollow of a tree. o o o "



A NEST OF THE ROSELLA
(OPENED OUT AND PHOTOGRAPHED).

LYRE-BIRD.



THE mocking-bird of the world is found along the eastern coast of Australia. It lives its life away in the wildest gullies of the great gum forests, and each year rears one young. It has a playground to add to the enjoyment of its days. o o o o o o o o



LYRE-BIRD ON ITS DANCING MOUND.

CUCKOO.



AUSTRALIA has many different Cuckoos, from 6 inches in length to 2 feet, but none that calls in imitation of its name. All but the Spur-footed Cuckoo leave other birds to rear their young. The young of the Bronze-Cuckoo, as shown in the illustration, is a plain little bird during the first few months of its life. Later it evolves into a most beautiful bird, well striped and rich in iridescent copper. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



YOUNG BRONZE-CUCKOO.

CUCKOO-SHRIKE.



THIS bird, with the flight of a Cuckoo and the bill of a Shrike, is common and well distributed. It is fond of fruit. The nest of the Black-faced species is placed on a horizontal bough, and is beautifully covered with spiders' webs to agree with its surroundings. The parents give much attention to their young. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE, WITH NEST AND EGGS.



BLACK-WINGED CROW-SHRIKE FEEDING ANXIOUS YOUNG.

CROW-SHRIKE.



THE accompanying illustration shows the
 young of the Black-winged species in
 still younger days. They exhibit a strong wish
 to be fed. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NESTLINGS OF BLACK-WINGED CROW-SHRIKE.

HONEY-EATER



THE family of Honey-eaters is a large one, and almost altogether confined to the Australian region. Their tongues are specially formed for collecting nectar from the blossoms distributed throughout the Commonwealth. The Crescent Honey-eater is found upon the shores of south-east Australia and Tasmania, and the illustration shows the bird visiting its nest, which, like that of nearly every other member of the family, is open and suspended. o o o



CRESCENT HONEY-EATER AND NEST.

THRUSH.



THE birds figured are the young of the Mountain-Thrush. They are not songsters. There is a grey species, known as the Harmonious Shrike-Thrush, which sings very pleasantly. The Song Thrush, introduced from Europe, is more varied in its song, and more commonly heard in the suburbs, but its voice is no finer than that of the native singer. The Mountain-Thrush loves to frequent gullies and be about the watercourses during all periods of the year. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



YOUNG OF MOUNTAIN-THRUSH IN NEST.

AUSTRALIAN CRANE.



[T is better known to us as the Native
 Companion—a long-legged bird, fond of
 hot country and swamps. Generally it nests
 upon the almost bare ground, but the illus-
 tration shows a nest being subject to flood.
 It was raised each day a little, and finally
 got to be 3 feet high. The bird indulges
 in a native “quadrille.” ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND EGGS OF CRANE (NATIVE COMPANION).

IBIS



ALONG the Murray River system we have the Ibis, once common to the ancient Egyptians. It is the same species. The plate shows an egg and young bird in the reed-beds of the Murray River. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NESTLING AND EGG IN NEST OF WHITE IBIS.

FISH-HAWK.



THE Osprey is the universally known name of this bird. It builds a huge structure of sticks upon a lonely beach of the ocean, and lays within the depression of it two large mottled eggs. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND EGGS OF OSPREY OR FISH-HAWK.

OYSTER-CATCHER.



ONLY on sea beaches may we see this active, red-legged bird. In the spring it lays two eggs upon the beach, but arranges so that the colours of the surroundings will be in keeping with the markings of its eggs. This is a case of colour-protection. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○



NEST AND EGGS OF SOOTY OYSTER-CATCHER.

PENGUIN.



ALONG the Australian coasts are two species. They keep to the sea, and almost live in the water, leaving it only at nesting time. The photograph of the Crested Penguins was made by the present writer on Kerguelen's Land, where this apparently wingless bird may be observed in millions. ○ ○ ○



A ROOKERY OF CRESTED PENGUINS, WITH THE RARE SHEATH-BILL
IN THE FOREGROUND.

CORMORANT.



I THINK no bird is so well fitted to catch its daily food as the Cormorant. It is thoroughly well developed in every region. Its diet is made up altogether of living fish, and they know this enemy on sight. o o o o



A NESTING COLONY OF WHITE-BREADED CORMORANTS.

ALBATROSS.



THE largest of sea birds is mostly found in the Southern Ocean. It is a great wanderer, and knows every island in the seas. The illustration shows a colony of Shy Albatrosses nesting on an island in Bass Strait. o o o o

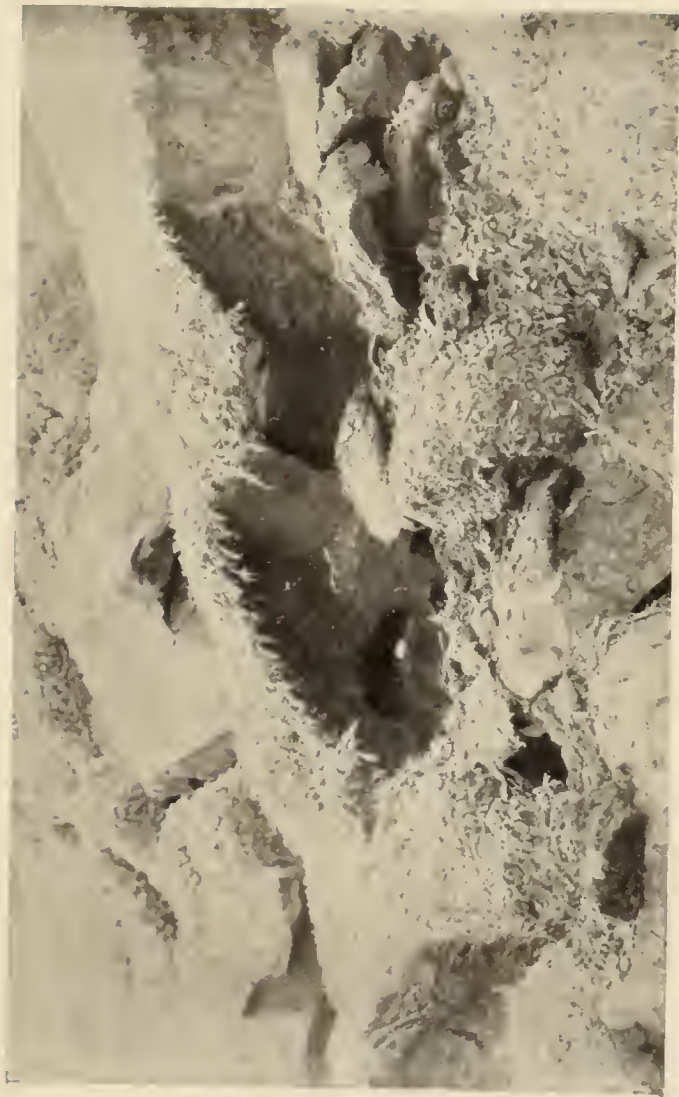


SHY ALBATROSSES ON NESTS.

PRION.



THIS genuine little sea bird is closely related to the Mother Carey Chickens. It burrows into the ground to nest, and sits upon one white egg. It nests in countless numbers upon the island of desolation known as Kerguelen's Land. The photograph, by the present writer, illustrates the nesting-burrow of the Dove-like Prion, cut away on one side. ◦ ◦



NEST AND EGG OF DOVE-LIKE PRION.

(ONLY HALF OF THE LONG BURROW HAS BEEN CUT AWAY.)

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